



Erie County Youth Bureau  
810 East Ferry Street  
Buffalo, NY 14211

# Youth Bureau Chronicle

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## Erie County Youth Board:

- Liza Acanfora
- Laverne Ampadu
- Kendall Bazinet
- Kelli Blakeley
- David Caywood
- Bill Conrad
- Paul Denning
- Susan Lumadue
- Corinne Nelson
- Juliana Norton
- Mitchell Nowakowski
- Kathleen O'Brien
- Mike Randall
- Ryan Taughrin
- Carolyn Welch

## A Welcome Letter from the Director

My name is Ben Hilligas and I am happy to announce that I am the new Director of the Erie County Youth Bureau. I have an MSW from the University of Buffalo and over eight years of experience working with at risk youth in a number of settings. Throughout my career I have come to realize the critical importance of staying current on research and practice. I believe strongly in the principles of Trauma-Informed Care, implementing evidence based programming and emphasizing diligent data collection and outcome measurement. These concepts guide my work and ultimately help to provide the best quality service for the youth we serve.

The City of Buffalo, and by extension Erie County, is experiencing a resurgence and renaissance that many would find hard to imagine a decade or two ago. We should all appreciate and embrace the great strides that our region has made in recent years and express our gratitude and congratulations to the many individuals and organizations that have helped to create this incredible momentum. Equally as important however is remembering the many neighborhoods and citizens, many of them young people, who have yet to benefit from the boom in development, economic investment and general civic pride. We are on our way to a brighter future in Western New York but we must ensure that no one, especially our youth who are undoubtedly our greatest recourse, get left behind. I look forward to working together to make this a reality.

**Benjamin Hilligas, Youth Bureau Director**

## Youth Board Welcomes Five New Members

The Erie County Youth Bureau is pleased to announce that it has recently added **five new Youth Board members**.

Kelli Blakeley, Paul Denning, Mitchell Nowakowski, Corinne Nelson, and Ryan Taughrin are our new members. Kelli Blakeley currently serves as Probation Supervisor with the Erie County Probation Department. Paul Denning is retired. He enjoyed a 40-year career as a Human Resource Director. Mitchell Nowakowski is a Laborer at Erie Community College. Corinne Nelson currently serves as Special Education Teacher at the Stanley K. Falk School. Ryan Taughrin is the Admissions & Student Services Coordinator at SUNY Buffalo. Together, these five individuals bring a variety and wealth of expertise and passion to the Youth Board.

Interested individuals should submit a resume, statement of intent, and three recent references to the Youth Bureau Director. Further details can be found on our website.



## Primetime 2014 Comes to a Close After a Great Summer of Programming!

Another successful summer of **Prime-time programming** has come and gone.

A total of 44 local not-for-profit agencies were funded this summer, including agencies who worked in the Secure Youth Detention facility, located at 810 East Ferry Street in Buffalo.

Approximately 5,000 youth all across Erie County were directly served as a result of Primetime funding. Programs ranged from academic remediation to reading challenges to swimming, kayaking, and archery.

Primetime ran from approximately July 7th-September 6th. During this critical period when youth are out of school and most vulnerable, these 44 funded agencies stepped in to provide critical services that are often lacking during the summer months.

Year Round programs will continue to operate through the end of this calendar

year. For this and all future funding cycles, special attention is being paid to prioritized Service Categories. Programs that focus on at least one of these categories will be highly favored: Mentoring; Gang, Violence, & Bullying Prevention; Educational Enrichment; Job Readiness; and Health Nutrition & Physical Activities.

Thank you to all those providing services to Erie County youth in 2014. It was certainly a summer to remember!



## Lights On! Event Shines A Spotlight on After-School Programming

The After-School Network of Western New York (ASNWNY) hosted the 5th Annual **Lights On! After School City-Wide Celebration** on Thursday, October 23rd from 4-7pm at Buffalo Public School #97—Harvey Austin.

The primary purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the importance of after-school programming and to “shine a light” on the many agencies and individuals that work tirelessly to provide local youth with safe, positive, and productive programming after classes have ended for the day.



Over 300 students were in attendance at the event, which featured several speakers, dancing, a photo shoot, candy, and fun for youth and adults alike!

Numerous studies have shown that youth are most vulnerable between the hours of 3-6pm. It has also been proven that if even more quality after-school programming was available, then more youth and families would participate.

The Buffalo event was one of more than 7,500 similar events across the nation. ASNWNY seeks to strengthen the WNY out-of-school time community.

## Agency Focus: King Urban Life Center

The **King Urban Life Center After-School and Summer Programs** have been in existence since 2002 at 945 Genesee Street on the East Side of Buffalo, providing a fun, educational and safe environment for youth ages 8 – 15.



The Year-Round, After-School Program runs from Monday – Friday, from 3:30 – 6:30pm. The Prime Time Summer Program runs from Monday – Friday from 12pm – 5pm. The youth develop art projects, design jewelry, and design dream catchers. They create and program Lego robots and learn Microsoft Office programs. They use Skills Tutor (an online academic skills program) and Khans Academy, and they attend daily ELA, math, art and technology workshops. In addition, the youth play educational

computer games, receive homework assistance, and go on field trips. Snacks and summer lunches are provided and they are cared for by a loving and nurturing staff.



## Agency Focus: Mt. Olive Baptist Church

**Mt. Olive, Inc. Afterschool Program** provides a structured opportunity for children in grades 1 - 6 to have access to after school activities that promote the safe and healthy development of our children.



Earlier this year, a group of Hilbert College student volunteers enjoyed a day of reading with our students for our reading is "FUNDamental Day!" We had a great

day and the children really enjoyed reading one-on-one with the Hilbert students. The Hilbert Students also left us with a donation of books for our reading area.



## Agency Focus: Concerned Ecumenical Ministry

**Concerned Ecumenical Ministry's Summer Primetime** program is called Teen Leadership, and for good reasons.

Students learned resume writing skills and used them to conduct a job search. Youth participated in activities that stressed team-building and community awareness, such as a scavenger hunt. Students also toured a local college campus and even a chocolate factory!

Primetime participants observed court case proceedings and received a tour of the Erie County Morgue. They learned how autopsies are performed, why they are performed, and organ donations.



Youth practiced life skills, particularly social, communication, and cultural awareness, throughout the summer. This equates to personal and career success.



## Erie County Youth Bureau

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**ECYB Mission: “To serve youth and families through asset development and advocacy, prevention, and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”**



[www2.erie.gov/  
socialservices](http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices) or search  
“Erie County Youth Bureau”

**To find out more information on the agencies mentioned in this edition, please check out their websites below:**

- ♦ **Concerned Ecumenical Ministry:** <http://cembuffalo.org/blog/>
- ♦ **King Urban Life Center:** <http://www.kingurbanlifecenter.org/>
- ♦ **Mt. Olive Baptist Church:** <http://www.mtolivelackawanna.org/>

## A Farewell Letter From the Former Youth Bureau Director

I have enjoyed my tenure here and I appreciate having had the opportunity to work with all of you and to see all of the wonderful work you do for the youth of Erie County. Thank you for the support, guidance, and encouragement you have provided me during my time as the Director of the Youth Bureau. It has been a pure joy to see the growth of all of the programs that the Youth Bureau oversees, and how much the youth of Erie County really do flourish from them. Keep up the good work!

**Racheal Tarapacki, Former Youth Bureau Director**